

RED RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION



RRVSD PANDEMIC PLAN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTANDING THE HAZARD

- A) Characteristics of Pandemic Influenza
- B) Influenza Transmission
- C) Symptoms
- D) Impact on Society
- E) Impact on Schools
- F) Differences between ordinary flu and pandemic flu
- G) History of Influenza Pandemics

PANDEMIC COORDINATION

- A) Membership
- B) Communication Plan
- C) Employee and Student Absenteeism
- D) Potential Closures

RRVSD PLANNING STAGES FOR A PANDEMIC

- A) RRVSD Stage One - Notification
- B) RRVSD Stage Two - Pandemic spreads
- C) RRVSD Stage Three - Pandemic hits
- D) RRVSD Stage Four - Containment
- E) RRVSD Stage Five - De-escalation

CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

- A) Further Information
- B) Hand Hygiene
- C) Building Hygiene
- D) Letter to Parents

INTRODUCTION

Because pandemic influenza causes a great deal of illness that could potentially lead to death and impacts on society's ability to function, The Red River Valley School Division, like others is preparing their response to a pandemic.

Until the time of an outbreak, no one knows exactly what the next pandemic will look like. A number of assumptions, based on previous pandemics and medical research, have been made for planning purposes.

PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff by mitigative actions (i.e. hand washing program, coughing in sleeves etc.);
2. To maintain regularly provided services to students and families as long as safe to do so or until directed otherwise; and
3. To respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by a central government authority or local government.

Objectives

1. To ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and following a pandemic);
2. To remain operational and maintain core instruction and services as long as possible;
3. To communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic event; and
4. To track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic.

UNDERSTANDING THE HAZARD

A) Characteristics of Pandemic Influenza

There are three types of influenza (A, B and C) as well as subtypes, all of which can cause infection in humans. Influenza A viruses are the most common cause of winter influenza epidemics. Influenza B Viruses circulate at lower levels causing less severe outbreaks. Influenza C viruses are typically mild and usually not considered a public concern.

Influenza A is the type involved in all known influenza pandemics. Influenza A viruses can undergo major changes or shifts in makeup, producing a completely new strain for which most people have little or no specific immunity. As a result, large numbers of individuals become infected as it spreads. **An epidemic that spreads throughout the world is known as a pandemic.**

B) Influenza Transmission

Influenza is easily passed from person to person by droplets and small particles released into the air when infected people cough or sneeze. The virus can travel about one metre in the air and has been shown to survive on hard surfaces (i.e. telephones and doorknobs) for 24 to 48 hours; on cloth, paper and tissue for 8 to 12 hours and on hands for 5 minutes. The virus survives better at low humidity, as we experience during winter.

C) Symptoms

Once infected with the influenza virus, it usually takes from one to three days for symptoms to develop. However, someone with influenza can be contagious from the day before they develop symptoms up to seven days afterwards. Not everyone who is infected with influenza gets sick, but it is still possible for them to spread it to others.

How do you know you have influenza? Respiratory illnesses caused by influenza are hard to distinguish from other respiratory illnesses by symptoms alone. Generally speaking, if you have a fever and a cough when influenza viruses are known to be circulating in the community, there is a good chance that you may have influenza. Typical symptoms often accompanied by a fever and cough are: aching muscles and joints, headache, severe weakness and fatigue, sore throat, runny nose. Symptoms can last four to seven days. A cough and general fatigue may persist for several weeks.

D) Impact on Society

It is expected that during a pandemic there will be a greater extent of illness and death than experienced during an ordinary influenza season. Public health experts guesstimate that 35% of people could become ill.

E) Impact on Schools

Business continuity in schools could be impacted by:

- Employee absenteeism
- Interruption of services and supplies and reduction in outside supports
- Potential school closures
- Potential additional duties for staff
- Financial losses or incremental costs
- Potential spread of infection at school
- Increased incidence of illness at school

F) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORDINARY FLU AND PANDEMIC FLU

	Ordinary Flu	Pandemic Flu
When, Where	Every year during the winter months in Canada and the rest of the Northern Hemisphere	Occurs about three times a century and can take place in any season. A pandemic is a global event.
Who	Affects Manitobans every winter	Affects more people than ordinary flu; one-quarter or more of the world's population.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe illness and deaths are generally confined to people over age 65: people with existing medical conditions like lung diseases, diabetes, cancer, and kidney or heart problems: people with weak immune systems and the very young. Four thousand deaths in Canada and approximately 100 deaths in Manitoba are attributed to influenza each year. These are cases where flu is known or highly suspected to have played a role in a person's death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pandemic flu is associated with much higher rates of illness, and a higher severity of illness and death. The worst flu pandemic of the last century - the 1918 Spanish Flu caused about 30,000 to 50,000 deaths in Canada alone and at least 20 to 40 million deaths worldwide. Some experts believe that these estimates are low. Those affected not necessarily the young or elderly. The 20 to 40 years age group could be targeted as the most vulnerable depending on the type of flu.
Prevention - Vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A slightly new vaccine is produced every year to ensure protection from the types of influenza expected to circulate in the community. This is required every year due to small changes in influenza viruses from one year to the next. The vaccine is effective because scientists are able to predict fairly reliably which types of influenza virus will circulate during the annual flu season in the Northern Hemisphere, based on flu activity in other parts of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vaccine against a pandemic type of influenza will not be available at the start of a pandemic. Because the virus type will be completely new, it will be different from the viruses that circulated the previous winter, and not predictable in the same way. Once a pandemic is detected, scientists need to identify the virus. A specific vaccine is then manufactured based on the scientific findings. It is anticipated that a specific vaccine will become available for use on a prioritized basis in months.
Prevention and Treatment- Antivirals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiviral drugs can be used to both treat and prevent influenza infections Currently, antiviral drugs are used to manage outbreaks of influenza in long-term care facilities and to a lesser extent, to protect and provide early treatment for people at risk of becoming seriously ill due to influenza. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiviral drugs are expected to be in limited supply. Countries including Canada, are stockpiling the antiviral drug oseltamvir (Tamiflu) Manitoba has participated in a national purchasing initiative to stockpile Tamiflu for use in a pandemic. The use of antivirals during a pandemic will depend on the nature and characteristics of the outbreak

G) HISTORY OF INFLUENZA PANDEMICS

Pandemic	"Spanish Flu"	"Asian Flu"	"Hong Kong Flu"
Strain	A (H1N1)	A (H2N2)	A (H3N2)
Year	1918-1919	1957-1958	1968-1969
Likely origin	Not known (first cases identified in Europe and U.S.)	China	China
Estimated deaths:			
Global	At least 20-40 million- some experts believe this is a low estimate.	1-2 million	1-4 million
Canada	30,000 - 50,000	Not known	Not known
Age Group Most Affected	Healthy young adults (20 to 50 years)	Very young and very old	Very old and those with underlying medical conditions.

PANDEMIC COORDINATION

A) MEMBERSHIP

Emergency Spokesperson - Superintendent & CEO, Board Chair

Emergency Coordinators - Assistant Superintendent, Transportation and Maintenance Supervisors

Admin Office Coordinator - Secretary Treasurer

Team members:

Senior Administration
Transportation Supervisor
Maintenance Supervisor
Student Services Coordinator(s)
Technology Coordinator
Administrators
Board Chair

Open and honest lines of communication will foster better working relationships, coordination and cooperation and will help create confidence and alleviate fear, disruption and inconvenience.

B) COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication will be concise, factual, and understandable. People will benefit from receiving information directly from an official source before hearing it informally in the community from second-hand or unofficial school sources.

Communication needs and responsibilities:

- Pandemic Coordinators will keep abreast of the latest pandemic information from official public health sources by consulting with regional health authorities and reviewing material on the Manitoba Government and Manitoba Health websites.
- Pandemic Team will meet to review the Pandemic Plan and expectations and needs of employees during the pandemic.
- The divisional website and First Class will be a reliable source of information for employees on the following:
 - How to prepare themselves and their families for a pandemic
 - What to do if they become infected.

- The measures the division is taking to remain operational.
- Information on suspended or reduced services.
- Coordinators will communicate as necessary with the community, regional health authorities and others regarding issues, needs identification and supports that the division and/or schools may be able to provide.
- Schools will not automatically be closed. IF some or all schools are closing, the division will try to provide parents with as much lead time as possible, including the reasons for the closure and a reasonable estimate of the duration of the closure. (See Section D: Potential Closures)

C) EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

Health experts estimate that employee absenteeism rates could range from around 20% to 35% or higher during a pandemic. Public health officials are using 35% absenteeism rates for planning purposes. Absenteeism among staff may be due to either personal or family illness.

Depending on the age group most affected by the specific pandemic influenza virus and how it spreads among the population, absenteeism rates of students and teachers may be the same, lower, or higher. Parents of students with chronic health conditions may choose to keep them at home.

Managing this issue:

Pre-event:

- Cross train staff on any specialized or technical activities.
- Prepare written instructions so that partially trained employees or volunteers can complete essential tasks.
- Document location of key information and means of accessing i.e. passwords, keys etc.

During the event:

- Combine similar grades if needed,
- Provide alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff.
- Prepare to temporarily combine schools.
- Scale back services - Postpone or cancel classes or events that are non essential or that require specialized teacher involvement i.e. music, industrial arts, etc.)
- Continue instruction for students who are home and well enough to do school work, (homework, virtual instruction on the internet, phone contact).

After the event:

- If directed by authorities, consider weekend classes or vacation school when conditions improve to enable students to complete the curriculum.

D) POTENTIAL CLOSURES

IF schools are closed, it may be due to one or more of the following reasons:

- Manitoba Public Health Officials ordering a temporary closure of all public schools. Closures could be province-wide or regional;
- Circumstances causing *only one* school to close temporarily (under the direction of the Minister of Education) for reasons such as excessive absenteeism of staff, students or a combination of both; and/or
- MECY, Manitoba Health, or other government authorities closing a school.

In case of school closure(s) the Superintendent & CEO and/or Pandemic Coordinator(s), with short notice could:

- Redeploy students to other schools in the division.
- Redeploy staff to other schools in the division.
- Lay off support staff.
- Change staff assignments.

STAGES OF A PANDEMIC

With talk of a possible pandemic, the division will review the current pandemic plan with central administration office personnel as determined by the pandemic coordinator.

Administrators will talk to staff about reviewing cough etiquette and hand hygiene with students

RRVSD STAGE 1 - NOTIFICATION

Step 1:

The division gets official notice from the Regional Health Authority and/or Manitoba Health that a pandemic has been declared.

Step 2

The pandemic coordinators will activate the Red River Valley School Division Pandemic Plan.

Step 3

Central Administration Office staff will be assembled for notification and coordination.

Step 4

The pandemic team will be notified and will be called to the office for a meeting and go through the RRVSD Pandemic Plan.

Some of the key organizations that will be leading a response to a pandemic influenza are:

- Emergency Measures Organization.
- Manitoba Health
- The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- The office of Disaster Management (ODM)

Schools will not be automatically closed.

While government authorities might have to exercise emergency measures that include closing schools, the expectation is that school will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible during a pandemic.

Step 5

School administrators will:

- Closely monitor student and staff absenteeism;
- Scrutinize field trips;
- Require approval from pandemic coordinators to enroll new students from or near the infected area;
- Send home with their parent or guardian children who become ill with influenza-like-illness (ILI). These children should not travel on school buses. If there is no other option and the child must ride a school bus, it is recommended that staff ensure the child sits on a seat by themselves and is able to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Devise a plan to cover the possible absence of custodial staff. Staff and students will need to clean the school if needed;
- Share information with parents (see Appendix D); and
- Consider any administrative activities that might be added during the pandemic (i.e. contacting parents of absent children).

RRVSD STAGE 2 - PANDEMIC SPREADS

Pandemic spreads.

Step 1:

Updated information sheets about the pandemic, symptoms, and prevention are provided to staff and parents.

Step 2

Updated information is posted on the website

Step 3

Each administration office staff is assigned a school for monitoring, needs identification and communication purposes. Administrators will communicate directly to the assigned office staff who will in turn communicate with Administration Office Coordinator (Secretary Treasurer).

- Albright
 - Peace Valley
 - Suncrest
 - Vermillion
- } Accountant
- Domain
 - Heritage
 - ICSP
- } Accounts payable
- J.A. Cuddy
 - Lowe Farm
 - Morris
- } Student Services Administrative assistant
- Oak Bluff
 - Rosenort
 - Sanford Collegiate
- } Accountant/Payroll
- St. Malo
 - Starbuck
- } Administrative assistant/HR coordinator

Central Administration Office staff will be on stand by and will be fielding calls from parents and the community.

RRVSD STAGE 3 - PANDEMIC HITS

Pandemic actually hits our division or individual school. Authorities have declared a state of emergency. At this point, it is possible that bus routes may be cancelled and some schools closed. Low staff and student attendance as well as the tendency of parents to keep their healthy unaffected children at home to avoid exposure will make the pandemic's growth sporadic.

Step 1

Administrators and Administration Office Staff are notified .

Step 2

Administrators will:

- Send information to parents;
- Halt all field trips;
- Halt all extracurricular activities;
- Cancel all "community use of school activities";
- Schools are sanitized daily (based on RHA guidelines);
- Continue to report Staff and Student absenteeism daily to assigned office staff;
- Prepare study packets for students; and
- If possible implement virtual school system online where students at nearly every grade level will have a menu of ongoing lesson plans to select from. The goal is to have this available to students for up to three months.

Step 3

Transportation supervisor will ensure buses are sanitized daily (based on RHA guidelines).

Step 4

Division website is updated frequently.

Step 5

Division hotline, manned by the Student Services Coordinator(s), begins operation.

RRVSD STAGE 4 -CONTAINEMENT

At this stage, the state of emergency is rescinded. Schools will begin the de-escalation phase.

Step 1

Communicate with all stakeholders

Step 2

Counselors, psychologist, social worker will be assigned to schools. They will meet with Student Services Coordinators to plan how they will work with staff and students as needed. Updating grief counseling skills will be a priority.

Step 3:

Staff and student absenteeism will be monitored closely. Administrators will need to implement a reopening plan.

Step 4

Student work will be reviewed and considered in the summative assessments.

Step 5

Consider holding ceremonies to remember deceased employees or students if applicable.

RRVSD STAGE 5 - DE-ESCALATION

In Stage 5, the crisis has passed and the schools are fully functional.

Step 1

Student Services Coordinators will continue to monitor counseling needs of individual schools.

Step 2

Team members will hold a meeting to debrief.

CONCLUSION

Diligent planning will pay big dividends in the event of a pandemic by helping to minimize the impacts and maintain levels of instruction for students.

This pandemic plan will be updated periodically to account for new information or practices related to influenza, to reflect the changes in the school division and its operations, and to keep contact and other information current.

GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA

Manitoba Government Avian Preparedness Influenza Strategy

Website <http://www.gov.mb.ca/>

Manitoba Health. Pandemic Influenza. Preparedness Guidelines for Manitoba School Divisions and Schools (K-12) October 2007

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/pandemic.html

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Public Health Agency of Canada

Canadian Influenza Pandemic Plan <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/>

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Website <http://www.who.int/>

THE SCRUB CLUB

A fun, interactive and educational web site that teaches children the proper way to wash their hands - www.scrubclub.org/home.aspx

Hand washing/hand hygiene reduces the number of micro-organisms on the hands and is *the most important* practice to prevent the spread of infection.

When:Before:

- Direct hands-on care of others
- Preparing, handling, serving or eating food
- Feeding others

After:

- Contact with items known or considered to be contaminated.
- Personal use of toilet, wiping nose or coughing.

Products:Plain Soap and Water

- Recommended for routine hand washing.

Alcohol-Based Hand rub:

- Products containing a minimum of 60% alcohol are an alternate when plain soap and water are not available
- If hands are visibly soiled, heavy soiling should be removed before using alcohol based hand rubs for maximum effectiveness.

How to wash: Using plain soap and water:

- Wet hands under warm running water. Use liquid or bar soap.
- Apply soap and distribute over hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 10-15 seconds to create a good lather.
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel.
- Turn off faucet using a clean disposable towel.

Using an Alcohol-based hand rub:

- Apply 2-3 ml of the product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- The product generally dries within 15-20 seconds.
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task.

Note: Alcohol products are flammable.

The following steps are recommended to maximize hygiene in schools during a pandemic. They focus on reducing spread of viral infection. Most of these activities are standard in schools but they may need to be undertaken with greater frequency to maintain high levels of sanitation during a pandemic.

GENERAL

- Surfaces must not show any visible soil before they are sanitized.
- Cleaning equipment should be maintained in a clean, dry state after use. Cloths mop heads, etc., should have single purpose use (floors or walls or furnishings only) and be changed when soiled.
- Receptacles are needed for disposal of soiled tissues throughout the school, close to the point of use.

PRODUCTS FOR CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- Cleaning with detergent and water is generally acceptable.
- Commercial household products are acceptable to sanitize environmental surfaces when used according to manufacturer's instructions.
- To prepare a noncommercial sanitizing solution, use unscented chlorine bleach:
 - For wiping surfaces, etc. (mix one tablespoon in four litres of water);
 - For immersing dishes, toys, dishcloths etc. (mix one tablespoon in four litres of water);
 - Mix fresh solution daily.
- Either liquid or bar soap can be used in washrooms. Liquid soap containers should not be "topped up"; instead, liquid soap should be supplied in disposable bags in wall containers by sinks or in small, non-refillable containers to avoid product contamination. Bar soap should be stored in racks which allow drainage of excess water (disease producing organisms can survive in stagnant water).
- Disposable (paper) towels should be used in public washrooms. If possible, install dispensers that require no hand contact to remove a towel. Individual cloth towels should not be shared.
- Provide waste basket for towels used to open washroom door upon exiting, or leave doors open.

CLEANING METHOD

- Cleaning should proceed from least to most soiled. Cleaning solutions would be changed when they appear dirty and/or after a spill cleanup.
- Cleaning primarily involves horizontal surfaces (i.e. desks, countertops, table tops, floors) and surfaces that are frequently handled (i.e. door knobs, telephones, bathroom fixtures).

CLEANING SCHEDULES

Cleaning schedules should be established according to the type of surface to be cleaned and the type of soiling that occurs. For example:

- Spill - clean immediately.
- Surfaces used for food preparation or diapering - clean after each use.
- Kitchen, bathrooms, playroom - clean daily and as necessary.
- Offices, countertops, computer keyboards, phones, appliances - clean weekly and as necessary.
- Furniture, walls, carpets, etc - follow a rotating schedule (monthly/yearly) and as necessary.
- Sports equipment such as balls for games - clean weekly.
- Reusable gloves - clean after each use.

ADEQUATE SUPPLIES

Schools should plan in advance for maintaining adequate resources for infection prevention and control in schools (soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand-rubs) as there may be an interruption of supply availability.



RED RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION
DIVISION SCOLAIRE VALLÉE de la RIVIÈRE-ROUGE

233 Main Street, P.O. Box 400, Morris, MB R0G 1K0
 Ph. 204.746.2317 • Fax 204.746.2785 • Email: rrvsd@rrvsd.ca

Date

DRAFT

Dear Parents,

Re: Pandemic Flu

For the past few months, a spreading influenza virus has been monitored by authorities. On *(date)* the Red River Valley School Division has received official notice that the World Health Organization has declared a pandemic.

Please note that schools will not automatically be closed. While government authorities might have to exercise emergency measures that may include closing schools, the working expectation is that **all our schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible** during the pandemic.

Some of the key organizations that will be leading a response to this pandemic influenza include:

- **Emergency Measures Organization (EMO)** will lead the Government of Manitoba response to the pandemic. Primarily it will work with government departments at a local, provincial and federal level to help manage the emergency.
- **The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health** will be leading public health emergency preparedness and response effort.
- **The Office of Disaster Management (ODM)** as part of Manitoba Health, this office will provide the framework for the health sector response to the pandemic. ODM will work with the federal and provincial health departments, regional health authorities and non-governmental organizations to ensure a coordinated response within the health sector.

We plan to communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, student and families regarding operations before, during and after this pandemic period.

In the meantime, people should take steps to minimize their risk of infection and the risk of spreading the virus to others. They include:

- Wash your hands and teach others to do the same;
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes;
- Don't share eating utensils or drinks, or school supplies such as pencils or rulers, or musical instruments with mouthpieces;
- Cover your cough;
- Get a vaccine when available; and
- Stay home if you are sick.

During this time, the goals of the Red River Valley School Division are:

1. To minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff.
2. To maintain services to students and families as long as safe to do so or until directed otherwise.
3. To respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by a central government authority or local government.

Any further information we receive about the pandemic will be monitored and disseminated through your school administrator or our divisional website www.rrvsd.ca

Sincerely,

Kelly Barkman
Superintendent & CEO